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Senate

The Senate met at 3 p.m. and was called to order by the President pro tempore (Mr. GRASSLEY).

PRAYER

The Chaplain, Dr. Barry C. Black, offered the following prayer:

Let us pray.

Gracious God, our rock of ages in life's shifting sands, give our lawmakers this day the abiding assurance of Your presence.

May they strive to be Your instruments, accomplishing Your will, living by Your power, and being used by You for Your glory. Enable them to experience Your contentment and peace facing life's chaos with quiet hearts and vibrant faith.

Lord, refresh their spirit, quicken their thinking, reinforce their judgment, and empower them to fulfill Your purposes on Earth.

We pray in Your mighty Name. Amen.

PLEDGE OF ALLEGIANCE

The President pro tempore led the Pledge of Allegiance, as follows:

I pledge allegiance to the Flag of the United States of America, and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.

RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mrs. BLACKBURN). Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Iowa is recognized.

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I ask permission to speak as in morning business for 3 minutes.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE AMERICAN LEGION

Mr. GRASSLEY. Madam President, I come to the floor to recognize the ac-

complishments of an organization that has done great service to communities and veterans across the United States.

This month marks 100 years since the American Legion received its charter from Congress and formally adopted its constitution. When it was established in Paris in March of 1919, the American Legion stated its aims, in part, "to perpetuate the principles of justice, freedom, and democracy for which we have fought."

The accomplishments of the American Legion since that time are numerous and profound. They include successfully lobbying for the creation of what was then called the Veterans Bureau, which would later become the VA, the Department of Veterans Affairs.

The American Legion also conducted pioneering research into PTSD and drafted the original GI bill that helped to educate so many World War II veterans after that war and gave a big boost to the expanding U.S. economy post-World War II.

American Legion members complete 3.7 million hours of community service each year. I happen to be a member of the Sons of the American Legion. As part of that organization, I am blessed to have had the American Legion make a meaningful impact in my life.

When I was a young high school student in Iowa, I was proud to participate in Boys State, where I learned the rights, privileges, and responsibilities of citizenship. The American Legion still does that every year in Iowa and I suppose in every State. Iowans are fortunate to have the enduring presence of the American Legion in our communities.

This August, two Iowans were recognized nationally for their dedication to the American Legion. Bruce Feuerbach of Keystone was elected national vice commander of the American Legion, and Nicole Clapp of Gladbrook was elected national president of the American Legion Auxiliary.

Many more accomplishments are sure to come from the American Legion's Iowa department. I congratulate the American Legion on its 100th year of service and thank all members for their dedication to Iowa and to our Nation.

I want to point out that there was a Major General MacNider, Mason City, IA, who was the fourth national commander of the American Legion and probably one of those who was dedicated to establishing this organization early on.

I yield the floor.

RECOGNITION OF THE MAJORITY LEADER

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The majority leader is recognized.

UNITED STATES-MEXICO-CANADA TRADE AGREEMENT

Mr. McCONNELL. Madam President, I was privileged to spend a good chunk of the day yesterday with the hard-working men and women of North American Stainless in Carroll County, KY. They are a high-quality stainless steel manufacturing firm that is actually the largest fully integrated stainless steel producer in the entire United States.

They produce about one-third of all U.S. stainless. The company brings 1,500 jobs to its rural community that is Kentucky's 8th largest manufacturer by total employment. I joined them yesterday to celebrate an important legislative accomplishment that I was able to spearhead back in July: the long overdue Senate ratification of a bipartisan tax treaty protocol with Spain. By passing this new protocol, we cleared away a mess of confusing and unfair double taxation, the threat of which had stunted growth and investment right here at home.

I got to hear again, firsthand, what a significant difference the approval of

● This "bullet" symbol identifies statements or insertions which are not spoken by a Member of the Senate on the floor.



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this simple bipartisan tax treaty will make for this American manufacturer. I was happy to hear the CEO announce that the company can now move forward with a major \$30 million capital investment in developing its facility and its workforce as a direct result of the ratification of that treaty.

It was just another reminder that the economic policies we vote on here, often on a bipartisan basis, make an enormous difference for workers and job creators in each of our States.

While we applauded the Spain tax treaty and the new prosperity it will unlock, it was impossible to overlook the fact that USMCA is still being blocked over in the House of Representatives. By one analysis, 12 million American jobs are dependent upon trade with Mexico and Canada. Together they make up a \$500 billion market for U.S. exports. It is no surprise that updating our trading relationships with both of our North American neighbors would stand to have a major positive effect on our economy.

To be more specific, according to data from the International Trade Commission, the USMCA would generate about 176,000 new American jobs. It would pump nearly \$70 billion into the U.S. economy, and the already massive markets for U.S. products would be expected to grow by tens of billions more.

For months, Speaker PELOSI and House Democrats have been claiming they notionally support this agreement and want to get to yes, but month after month, this happy talk has seemingly led to no tangible progress, just more heel-dragging. Hard-working Kentuckians, people like our farmers and our cattlemen, keep writing to me and asking Congress to pass the USMCA, but Speaker PELOSI will not make time for it.

House Democrats have enough time to continue their 3-year-old obsession with impeaching the President, but they cannot find the time to pass a landmark trade deal that will create 176,000 new American jobs. Just saying their priorities out loud indicates how backward they are.

HONG KONG

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, now, on a totally different matter, Hong Kong has been rocked by more violence as citizens continue resisting the Chinese Communist Party's encroachment on their autonomy and freedoms.

On Monday, it appears the local police shot a 21-year-old protester at nearly point-blank range. The police have arrested hundreds of demonstrators, reportedly as young as 12 and as old as 82. Tear gas, rubber bullets, and other violent measures have now become standard fare.

A few days earlier, a number of democracy-supporting Hong Kong legislators were swept up in a government crackdown. These elected officials were

either arrested or given summons just a few weeks before local elections.

These continuing government escalations are inconsistent with the Hong Kong Basic Law, with international agreements, and with the will of Hongkongers. Brutalizing their own people will not circumvent the core issue here: Beijing's insatiable thirst for control.

I have advocated for Hong Kong since I wrote our Nation's Hong Kong Policy Act back in 1992. I know many of us in this body now want to extend and expand that law in a targeted manner that focuses pressure on the Chinese Communist Party and its agents who are responsible for undermining Hong Kong's autonomy while minimizing the collateral economic damage to the very Hongkongers we want to help.

I am eager to continue working with colleagues, such as Senator RISCH, Senator GRAHAM, Senator RUBIO, and others, toward a strong and procedurally workable solution. Meanwhile, I appreciate statements by administration leaders such as Vice President PENCE and Secretary Pompeo that show a clear-eyed perspective on China's Orwellian tactics and bad intentions.

I urge the administration to use the significant leverage and authorities it already has, particularly under the Global Magnitsky Act, to hold individuals accountable.

Hong Kong is not the only recent reminder that we live in a dangerous world in which America's interests, allies, and ideals are constantly threatened. Press reports this morning indicated that Israel is suffering yet another round of terror, including more than 160 rocket launches fired against civilian targets in Israel. This comes after Israeli forces appear to have eliminated one high-ranking leader in the terrorist group Palestinian Islamic Jihad, in Gaza, and targeted another PIJ terrorist in Damascus, Syria.

The United States stands with our ally Israel against PIJ, Hamas, and Hezbollah terrorists who have long sought to erase the Jewish State. If these reports are accurate, it will be no surprise that one of these terrorist leaders was holed up in Damascus.

Syria, under Assad, stands alongside Iran as the chief patron of anti-Israel terrorism. This is just another reminder that the United States and some of our closest allies have a strong say in the future of Syria and that a victory for Assad will be a victory for Iran and for terrorism.

So every hour seemingly brings more evidence of our troubled world, but, just as with the trade agreements, critical legislation in this area is currently frozen in place. It is another casualty of Democrats' apparent inability to make headway on anything besides fighting with the White House.

For the second time in 2 months, Senate Democrats recently voted once again to filibuster the annual funding for our Armed Forces—for our men and women in uniform—and while Senate

Democrats block appropriations for defense, House Democrats are now slow-walking the authorizing legislation—the NDAA. Since the first NDAA was passed way back in 1961, Congress has never failed to pass a bipartisan NDAA by the end of the year—not once. Yet with House Democrats fixated on impeachment, I understand that Chairman ADAM SMITH and his fellow Democrats are now dragging their heels on the conference committee that is needed to complete this bill. These House Democrats passed a uniquely partisan NDAA earlier this year, unlike the Senate's bipartisan version, and now they are slow-walking the conference committee.

These are among our most basic governing responsibilities: passing an NDAA and funding our Armed Forces. The United States of America cannot operate at less than full strength on the world stage because Democrats are too busy—too busy—impeaching the Commander in Chief.

NOMINATIONS

Mr. MCCONNELL. Madam President, on one final matter, while our Democratic colleagues continue to block the Senate from moving forward with defense funding here on the floor, we will use this time to confirm more of the President's well-qualified nominees to the executive branch and to the Federal bench.

Later this week we will consider the nomination of Steven J. Menashi to be U.S. circuit judge for the Second Circuit. Mr. Menashi is a graduate of Dartmouth College and Stanford University Law School. He has accrued an impressive record in private practice and earned clerkships on the D.C. Circuit and the Supreme Court with Justice Alito.

First, we will consider the nomination of Chad Wolf to serve in a senior leadership position post at the Department of Homeland Security. Mr. Wolf's experience at the Department dates back to the immediate aftermath of the September 11th terrorist attacks. He has had a hand in arranging our Nation's critical homeland security infrastructure. The current Acting Secretary of DHS has called him a "proven, thoughtful, and principled executive," and a former Assistant Secretary at the Department said, "Chad knows the issues cold."

I hope my colleagues will join me in advancing each of these nominations later this week.

CONCLUSION OF MORNING BUSINESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Morning business is closed.